

1st Print

[No Report.]

Mr Craig

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

JANUARY 26, 1859.

Read a first and second time, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. JAMES CRAIG, from the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, reported the following bill :

A BILL

To provide for the transportation of the United States mails from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That the Postmaster General be, and he is hereby, authorized
4 and required to contract with responsible parties for the
5 transportation of the United States mails between New York,
6 San Francisco, and Astoria, in Oregon, four times a month
7 each way, via Panama, reserving the right to order not more
8 than one-half of said service via Nicaragua when that route
9 is open and undisturbed, provided no additional cost of
10 transportation shall be incurred thereby ; and he shall also
11 require said contractors to transport from Acapulco to San

12 Francisco and Astoria such mail matter as may be transported
13 over the Tehuantepec route.

1 SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That the Postmaster
2 General shall also contract with responsible parties for the
3 transportation of the mails from New Orleans, via Tehuantepec,
4 to Acapulco, four times a month each way, and, in so doing, to
5 arrange the junction of such mails with the mails via Panama
6 and Nicaragua at Acapulco. It shall also be his duty to arrange
7 in said contract for the transportation of the New Orleans
8 mails, via Vera Cruz, to Acapulco, in the event of the inter-
9 ruption or the discontinuance of the Tehuantepec route.

1 SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That it shall not be
2 lawful for the Postmaster General to pay for any service
3 authorized herein, except upon evidence of the performance
4 thereof, nor to contract to pay a sum exceeding six hundred
5 and eighty thousand dollars per annum for the transportation
6 of the mails between New York, San Francisco, and Astoria,
7 nor a sum exceeding two hundred and fifty thousand dollars
8 per annum for the service from New Orleans to Acapulco, as
9 hereinbefore specified; nor shall he contract to pay a sum
10 exceeding one dollar and ten cents per mile for the whole
11 service from New York to Astoria, including land and water
12 transportation, the aggregate amount being limited by the
13 above restriction.

1 SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted*, That the Postmaster

2 General shall require adequate security for the performance of
3 the contracts entered into by authority of this act, and shall
4 make no contract for more than ten or less than five years ;
5 the service to commence on the first day of October, eighteen
6 hundred and fifty-nine, or sooner, if the same can be legally
7 done without violating existing contracts ; and to provide for
8 the transportation of said mails through from New York to
9 San Francisco within twenty-four days, and to arrange a proper
10 schedule for the service from New Orleans to Acapulco, and
11 from San Francisco to Astoria.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

JANUARY 26, 1859.

Mr. ENGLISH, from the committee, gave notice of his intention, at the proper time, to offer the following amendment in the nature of a substitute.

AMENDMENT.

A bill to provide for the transportation of the United States mails between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That the Postmaster General be, and he is hereby, authorized
4 and required to invite proposals, and contract with the lowest
5 responsible bidder or bidders, for the transportation of a
6 monthly mail, or oftener, on any or all of the Isthmus transit
7 routes, between New York and San Francisco, and New Or-
8 leans and San Francisco, from the first of October, eighteen
9 hundred and fifty-nine, to the thirtieth of September, eighteen
10 hundred and sixty-four, inclusive: *Provided*, That the com-
11 pensation to be allowed for the service shall not, in any case,
12 exceed the United States postages upon the mails conveyed.

1 SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That if satisfactory
2 and responsible bids shall not be received, providing for at

3 least a semi-monthly service between the Atlantic States and
4 San Francisco, for the United States postages as compensa-
5 tion, the Postmaster General be, and he is hereby, authorized
6 to contract with the lowest responsible bidder or bidders for
7 the transportation of a semi-monthly mail, or oftener, between
8 the Atlantic and Pacific States, during the same period, over
9 any one or more of said routes, at a sum or sums not to exceed
10 in the aggregate for the whole service three hundred and
11 twenty-five thousand dollars per annum: *Provided*, That it
12 shall be stipulated in such contract or contracts, as the case
13 may be, that the service between New York and San Fran-
14 cisco shall be performed within twenty-five days each trip,
15 and between New Orleans and San Francisco within twenty
16 days each trip.

1 SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That the Postmaster
2 General shall, before entering into any contract or contracts
3 under the provisions of this act, be fully satisfied of the ability,
4 pecuniary and otherwise, of the party or parties proposing for
5 the service, and require good and sufficient security for the
6 regular and faithful performance of the same; and shall also
7 insert in said contract that the steamships employed in con-
8 veying the mails shall be safe and substantial steamers, and
9 suitable in all respects for the proper performance of the
10 service.